3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

tween, these were the scalp poles and effigies of the gods. The ground on which the village was located was chosen for defence, the bluff on the river side went down perpendicularly, and the village was on a point jutting out into the river so that only one side needed protection. Across this point was a palisade and inside this was a ditch, three to four feet deep according to Catlin. The palisade, he says, was of timbers eighteen feet high and one or more feet in diameter, set far enough apart to allow of shooting between. The warriors stayed in the ditch in defending the palisade. Concerning this palisade Henry and Maximilian both mention that it was in very poor repair indeed, but Henry adds that he was told it could be put in good condition very soon, every person in the village lending a hand. There is yet no mention of bastions and ramparts such as Verendrye refers to, but Maximilian[1] describes something similar. He says that at the corners of the palisade in four places were arcs or bastions, which formed an angle open toward the village, and said to have been built by the whites. These were intrenchments in the form of an arc, covered with a matting of willow and having loop holes.

On entering the village it seemed to be a mass of circular houses from forty to ninety feet in diameter, set down haphazard closely crowded together. The houses were of earth with a smooth coating of pounded clay on the top, where most of the inhabitants were usually stationed. Before each house was a scaffold, fronting the covered entrance. These scaffolds were six feet high, twenty feet long and ten broad[2] and were used for hanging up corn and meat to dry. They had a good floor, also, which was covered in the fall with drying beans. The staging for drying corn and meat was made as follows:[3] posts were set up on the scaffolds themselves, across these rafters were laid, and upon these cross rafters or poles the corn, meat and sliced squashes were hung. Before almost every house were one or more poles about twenty feet high, to which images of the gods, or sacrifices to them were attached.

In the center of the village was a large open space of about

[1] Op. cit., p. 31. [2] Henry: vol. I, p. 340. [3] Ibid.

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

state of decay, were erected for the Indians by the Whites. There is nothing of the kind at Ruhptare. The huts, as I have before remarked, stand close to each other, leaving, in the centre, an open circular space, about sixty paces in diameter, in the centre of which (among the Mandans) the ark of the first man is set up,[1] of which we shall speak in the sequel. It is a small cylinder, open above, made of planks, about four or five feet high, fixed in the ground, and bound with climbing plants, or pliable boughs, to hold them together (see the woodcut, p. 342).

At the north end of this circular space is the medicine lodge, in which festivals are celebrated, and certain customs practised, which are connected with the religious notions of this people, which we shall treat of in the sequel. At the top of a high pole, a figure is here placed, made of skins, with a wooden head, the face painted black, and wearing a fur cap and feathers, which is intended to represent the evil spirit, Ochkih-Hadda (corresponding with the devil), or a wicked man, as they affirm, who once appeared among them, had neither wife nor child, and vanished, and whom they now stand greatly in dread of. Other grotesque figures, made of skins and bundles of twigs, we saw hanging on high poles, most of them being offerings to the deity. Among the huts are many stages of several stories, supported by poles, on which they dry the maize. The huts themselves are of a circular form, slightly vaulted, having a sort of portico entrance. When the inmates are absent the entrance is shut up with twigs and thorns; and if they wish merely to close the door they put up a skin stretched out on a frame, which is shoved aside on entering. In the centre of the roof is a square opening for the smoke to find vent, over which is a circular sort of screen made of twigs, as a protection against the wind and rain, and which, when necessary, is covered with skins (see woodcut).

The interior of the hut is spacious, tolerably light, and cleanly. Four strong pillars towards the middle, with several cross beams, support the roof. The inner circumference of the hut is formed by eleven or fifteen thick posts, four or five feet in height, between which other rather shorter ones are placed close to each other. On these shorter posts, which are all of an equal

[1] [This shrine, the sacred cedar, represents the culture hero's body. See Category 116, Source 2: Bower, pp. 24, 116 for more up-to-date summary.--Analyst]

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

some slight differences, the mode of building resembles, in the main, those of the Mandans, Manitaries, and Arikkaras. Among these differences are the mats which are fastened all round in the first hut, and which I did not observe among the tribes that I visited. The beds, too, are arranged in a different manner. The Mandans and Manitaries are seen in their huts, sitting round the fire, employed in all kinds of domestic labour. The man has, generally, no clothing except the nokka, and is often merely smoking, but the women are never idle. In winter, that is, at the beginning or middle of November, these Indians remove, with the greater part of their effects, to the neighbouring forest, where their winter huts are situated. These consist of precisely similar huts, of rather smaller dimensions. Their departure from the summer huts is determined by the weather, but, as beforesaid, is generally about the middle of November; and their return, in the spring, is usually about the latter end of February, or the beginning of March, so that we may reckon that they pass above eight months in their summer quarters. Inside of the winter huts is a particular compartment, where the horses are put in the evening, and fed with maize. In the daytime they are driven into the prairie, and feed in the bushes, on the bark of poplars. There are, probably, above 300 horses in the two Mandan villages; some of the people, indeed, do not possess any, while others, again, have several. The Mandans and Manitaries, like all the other Indians of this country, sometimes make what are here called caches, or hiding-places, in the vicinity of their villages. These caches are holes, or magazines, underground, often so artfully contrived that it is very difficult to discover them. The Indians frequently go from their winter to their summer village, to fetch any articles they may happen to want, as they invariably leave part of their property behind. When they quit their huts for a longer period than usual, they load their dogs with the baggage, which is drawn in small sledges, made of a couple of thin, narrow boards, nine or ten feet in length, fastened together with leather straps, and with four cross-pieces, by way of giving them firmness. Leather straps are attached in front, and drawn either by men or dogs. The load is fastened to the sledge by straps (for such a sledge drawn by dogs see Vignette XXIX). When the snow is deep, they use snow shoes (Plate XXI. Fig. 4), which are described by Captain Franklin, only those of the Mandans are much smaller, about two feet and a half long; whereas in the north their length is from four to six feet. The Mandans and Manitaries have not, by any means, so many dogs as the Assiniboins, Crows, and Blackfeet. They are rarely of the true wolf's colour, but generally black, or white, or else spotted with black and white. Among the nations further to the north-west they more nearly resemble the wolf, but here they are more like the prairie wolf (*Canis latrans*). We likewise found, among these animals, a brown race, descended from European pointers, hence the genuine bark of the dog is more frequently heard here, whereas among the western nations they only howl. The Indian dogs are worked very hard, have hard blows, and hard fare; in fact, they are treated just as this fine animal is treated among the Esquimaux.

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
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plunge into and swim across the wildest streams and rivers, at times when they have no canoes or craft in which to cross them. I have as yet seen no tribe where this art is neglected. It is learned at a very early age by both sexes, and enables the strong and hardy muscles of the squaws to take their child upon the back, and successfully to pass any river that lies in their way.

The mode of swimming amongst the Mandans, as well as amongst most of the other tribes, is quite different from that practiced in those parts of the civilized world, which I have had the pleasure yet to visit. The Indian, instead of parting his hands simultaneously under the chin, and making the stroke outward, in a horizontal direction, causing thereby a serious strain upon the chest, throws his body alternately upon the left and the right side, raising one arm entirely above the water and reaching as far forward as he can, to dip it, whilst his whole weight and force are spent upon the one that is passing under him, and like a paddle propelling him along; whilst this arm is making a half circle, and is being raised out of the water behind him, the opposite arm is describing a similar arcl. in the air over his head, to be dipped in the water as far as he can reach before him, with the hand turned under, forming a sort of bucket, to act most effectively as it passes in its turn underneath him.

By this bold and powerful mode of swimming, which may want the grace that many would wish to see, I am quite sure, from the experience I have had, that much of the fatigue and strain upon the breast and spine are avoided, and that a man will preserve his strength and his breath much longer in this alternate and rolling motion, than he can in the usual mode of swimming, in the polished world.

In addition to the modes of bathing which I have above described, the Mandans have another, which is a much greater luxury, and often resorted to by the sick, but far more often by the well and sound, as a matter of luxury only, or perhaps for the purpose of hardening their limbs and preparing them for the thousand exposures and vicissitudes of life to which they are continually liable. I allude to their vapour baths, or *sudatories*, of which each village has several, and which seem to be a kind of public property—accessible to all, and resorted to by all, male and female, old and young, sick and well.

In every Mandan lodge is to be seen a crib or basket, much in the shape of a bathing-tub, curiously woven with willow boughs, and sufficiently large to receive any person of the family in a reclining or recumbent posture; which, when any one is to take a bath, is carried by the squaw to the sudatory for the purpose, and brought back to the wigwam again after it has been used

These sudatories are always near the village, above or below it, on the bank of the river. They are generally built of skins (in form of a Crow or Sioux lodge which I have before described), covered with buffalo skins

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
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sewed tight together, with a kind of furnace in the centre; or in other words, in the centre of the lodge are two walls of stone about six feet long and two and a half apart, and about three feet high; across and over this space, between the two walls, are laid a number of round sticks, on which the bathing crib is placed (vide PLATE 71). Contiguous to the lodge, and outside of it, is a little furnace something similar, in the side of the bank, where the woman kindles a hot fire, and heats to a red heat a number of large stones, which are kept at these places for this particular purpose; and having them all in readiness, she goes home or sends word to inform her husband or other one who is waiting, that all is ready; when he makes his appearance entirely naked, though with a large buffalo robe wrapped around him. He then enters the lodge and places himself in the crib or basket, either on his back or in a sitting posture (the latter of which is generally preferred), with his back towards the door of the lodge; when the squaw brings in a large stone red hot, between two sticks (lashed together somewhat in the form of a pair of tongs) and, placing it under him, throws cold water upon it, which raises a profusion of vapour about him. He is at once enveloped in a cloud of steam, and a woman or child will sit at a little distance and continue to dash water upon the stone, whilst the matron of the lodge is out, and preparing to make her appearance with another heated stone: or he will sit and dip from a wooden bowl, with a ladle made of the mountain-sheep's horn, and throw upon the heated stones, with his own hands, the water which he is drawing through his lungs and pores, in the next moment, in the most delectable and exhilarating vapours, as it distils through the mat of wild sage and other medicinal and aromatic herbs, which he has strewed over the bottom of his basket, and on which he reclines.

During all this time the lodge is shut perfectly tight, and he quaffs this delicious and renovating draught to his lungs with deep drawn sighs, and with extended nostrils, until he is drenched in the most profuse degree of perspiration that can be produced; when he makes a kind of strangled signal, at which the lodge is opened, and he darts forth with the speed of a frightened deer, and plunges headlong into the river, from which he instantly escapes again, wraps his robe around him and "leans" as fast as possible for home. Here his limbs are wiped dry, and wrapped close and tight within the fur of the buffalo robes, in which he takes his nap, with his feet to the fire; then oils his limbs and hair with bear's grease, dresses and plumes himself for a visit—a feast—a parade, or a council; or slicks down his long hair, and rubs his oiled limbs to a polish, with a piece of soft buckskin, prepared to join in games of ball or Tchung-kee.

Such is the sudatory or the vapour bath of the Mandans, and, as I before observed, it is resorted to both as an every-day luxury by those who have the time and energy or industry to indulge in it; and also used by the sick as a remedy for nearly all the diseases which are known amongst them.

10: Neill H-4(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

and treasures, as it contains every thing he values most, viz: two bulls' heads, which seem to be their great Manitou and protection. They are well daubed over with earth, and particular care is taken of them. There is laid on, or rather hung up, his arms, shield, ammunition, scalps of his enemies, and every thing he most values. 353

MORTAR AND PESTLE.

Next to this stage, stand the mortar and pestle, fixed firm in the ground, and the remainder of the hut from that to the door is vacant during the daytime, but occupied during the night by the horses. Then there still remains a large space in the center, around the fire, for the use of the family, which is generally swept clean once a day. 342 412 231 1/1

CORN STAGE.

Fronting the entrance of each porch stands a stage raised about eight feet from the ground, twenty feet in length, and ten feet in breadth, for the purpose of hanging up their corn to dry, in the fall; these stages have a tolerable good flooring, which in the fall is covered with beans to dry, and posts are erected upon them, on the tops of which are laid poles or rafters, to which the corn and sliced squashes are suspended in tresses to dry. When their harvest is over, they must have a pretty effect, but at this season of the year they are lumbered up with different kinds of drift-wood, of which they make their fires, and it gives a very ugly appearance to the villages. 343 251 313 372

DRIFT WOOD.

This wood they collect, in the spring, when the ice breaks up, and when great quantities of this wood floats down, the natives being expert swimmers, and so very active, that there is scarcely a large tree escapes them, until they have a sufficient stock for the year. I observed lying opposite to each village, an immense pile of this wood, and some trees of an amazing size. Commonly, when they collect the drift wood there come down numbers of drowned buffalo, that have perished in attempting to cross above, at a season when the ice was bad. These animals the natives are very careful to haul on shore, as they prefer the flesh in that state. [222] [268]

LIGHT HAIRED CHILDREN.

An extraordinory sight that struck me among these people, was to see several children, of about ten years of age, whose hair was perfectly gray, and bore a strong resemblance to aged persons. Those I saw were all girls. These people in general have not that strong coarse hair, so peculiar to the natives of North America; it is of a much finer nature, rather inclining to 142

1/1 [See Category 116, p. 390.-Ed.]